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International Writing Program Archive of Residents' Work

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Fall 10-1-2012

## Writing Sample

Nay Phone Latt

Includes "Fly in Peace."

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### Recommended Citation

Latt, Nay Phone, "Writing Sample" (2012). *International Writing Program Archive of Residents' Work*. 381.

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## NAY PHONE LATT

## Fly in PEACE

Though I can't see where I am flying, I turn my mind in an my imaginary canvas, as if watching a movie about Kabul. The images in my mind's eye are changing chaotically; the only theme holding them together is blood and tears. Is there anyone who doesn't long for an embrace? But the soldiers patrolling Kabul are frightened by the living bombs' embrace, an embrace whose reason can't be predicted. In our own country, who wouldn't be happy to have a party with his family? But here, the families are divided because of war, are holding their festivities full of fear, their happiness incomplete. I smile to myself as I am steering the plane, careful to not veer away from our fixed direction. Yet again, I am flying the B-150 toward Kabul. I tilt my head up and look at the other four bomber planes flying side by side with me. What are they thinking? Regardless of whether the duty ahead of us will move us closer toward world peace, we are now approaching Kabul.

We named this project 'Peace.' If you look up to the sky from the ground, you will see the five bombers each carrying a letter in its belly. If you spell these five letters, you will get that word, P-E-A-C-E. My letter, A, is in the middle. I send the signal to four bombers to let them know we are approaching the border.

"Roger"

I know they are ready to follow my orders. In the seconds before I give the order to open the back flap, I hear again the words of my commanding officer:

"No matter what the criticism is of this idea, I believe it can bring peace to the world."

I too want to believe that. I give orders to the other pilots to open their rear drop doors, and I open my own.

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As if angry that it can't light up the world the night too, the sun rises fierce, its rays pulsing. It is morning and the city is still free from the smoke of the gunpowder. It is a blessing to not be hearing the sounds of blasts or fire. The city's neighborhoods come alive slowly and steadily, to the sound of the prayers. Doesn't God hear them, or is he indifferent to this part of the world?

The approaching bombers send a sound wave toward the city, an omen of their arrival. Many of the city's inhabitants rush down to the streets. There the NATO soldiers are standing still, their heads tilted up to the heavens. With hope they gaze toward the sound. An abstract mass calling itself a cloud blocks the sun's rays and takes over a swath of the sky. Where is the sound coming from? From beyond this huge mass.

Those on the ground look up, anxious. What to expect from this darkness? Suddenly the bombers appear in a straight line, piercing the cloud cover. The crowd screams.

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On the ground the elders try to calm down the shouting, to prevent more chaos. Then they hearing the soldiers say the word "PEACE," reading it out-loud on the bellies of the five planes. Briefly, the crowd is relieved of their fear.

Then, gazing as the bombers are passing over them, they see their back flaps opening. In astonishment all go silent again.

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Having performed my duty, I turn back from Kabul. On the plane, made lighter by the dropped cargo, my heart is heavy with satisfaction. My eyes fill with tears. Through their blur, and through the memory of the crashing noise, I recall what had been said.

“We will transform the bombers to planes scattering flowers. Rather than loading explosives, we will load what make wild hearts go soft and tender.”

Everybody will understand the message without us needing us to describe it. Flowers represent humanity’s good will toward places at war or in a state of terror, a will to be peaceful to them. Your love will flow to them through the flowers and turn their hearts soft and tender. We believe that strongly, and surely.

Seeing the flowers bearing your love for them, the hands that would ignite the detonator, the hands that would trigger the gun, will hesitate, drop their arms and pick up a flower instead, to feel its scents. We fervently hope for that kind of transformation.

“All who love peace, please send a flower to us. We will transport them to the territories in disarray and war, transforming our bombers to planes filled with millions of them. You, the people around the world, please make peace happen in our beloved world by sending a flower to us.”

Within a few days, mountains of flowers piled up in the places we arranged. Clearly and with our own eyes, we saw the people’s eagerness for peace. This desire is what made it possible to transform the bombers into flower planes. Already five loads were successfully scattered over the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul.

That is the first target of our project. Can society's humanity, kindness, love and the millions of flowers that are the messages of peace reconcile long-standing hatreds and old injuries? Will the hearts bearing so much grudge that they are unable to value the lives of others worry that the flowers will perish in the violence?

For all my doubts, the flight home was clear and beautiful, my heart full of euphoria.

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That day, Kabul was filled with flowers.  
The weaponry had been shamed, the sounds of gunfire were quieter.